

Appl. No.: 10/090,525

Filed: March 4, 2002

Page 2

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A comb polymer that is water-soluble, or water-dispersible, or both, comprising a polymer main chain and polyester side-arms which contain sulphene sulfonic acid groups and are linked to said polymer main chain via ester groups, which side-arms have been at least partially neutralized by sodium and lithium counterions, wherein the molar ratio of lithium to sodium is between 0.1 and 50.
2. (original) The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of lithium to sodium is between 0.5 and 25.
3. (currently amended) The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the comb polymer [polymer main chain] comprises at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polymeric aliphatic, cycloaliphatic and aromatic polycarboxylic acids polymers and derivatives thereof.
4. (currently amended) The comb polymer according to Claim 3, wherein the polymeric aliphatic, cycloaliphatic and aromatic polycarboxylic acids polymers and derivatives thereof comprise at least one polymer selected from the group consisting of polyacrylic acid, polymethacrylic acid, esters of polyacrylic acid, or esters of polymethylacrylic acid [with at least one C₁-C₂₂ aliphatic, cycloaliphatic or aromatic alcohol], polymaleic acid, polymaleic anhydride, polyfumaric acid or and polynorbornenic acid.
5. (cancelled)
6. (currently amended) The comb polymer according to Claim 5 23, wherein p and o are selected so that the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 2000 and 100,000 g/mol.
7. (currently amended) The comb polymer according to Claim 5 28, wherein said one or more additional counterions of R¹ are selected from the group consisting of potassium,

Appl. No.: 10/090,525

Filed: March 4, 2002

Page 3

magnesium, calcium, ammonium, monoalkylammonium, dialkylammonium, trialkylammonium and tetraalkylammonium, wherein the alkyl positions of the amines ammoniums, independently of one another, comprise a C₁ to C₂₂-alkyl radical and 0 to 3 hydroxyl groups.

8. (currently amended) The comb polymer according to Claim 5 28, wherein said mono- or polyethoxylated sulphonated organyl radicals bridged via ether functions of R² comprise a radical of the formula -(O-CH₂-CH₂)_s-SO₃R¹, wherein s ≥ 1 and is selected so that the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 200 and 2,000,000 g/mol.

9. (original) The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 200 and 2,000,000 g/mol.

10. (original) The comb polymer according to Claim 9, wherein the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 2000 and 100,000 g/mol.

11. (original) The comb polymer according to Claim 10, wherein the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 1000 and 30,000 g/mol.

12. (original) The comb polymer according to Claim 11, wherein the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 5000 and 15,000 g/mol.

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

Appl. No.: 10/090,525

Filed: March 4, 2002

Page 4

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)

24. (cancelled)

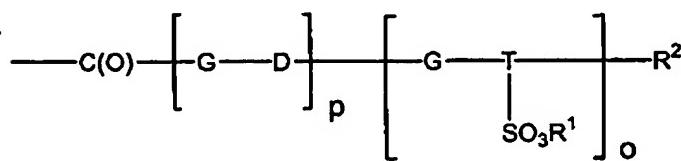
25. (cancelled)

26. (cancelled)

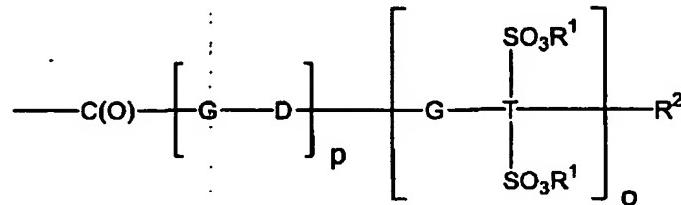
27. (cancelled)

Please add the following new claim:

28. (new) The comb polymer according to Claim 1, wherein the polyester side arms comprise at least one polyester selected from the group consisting of:



Formula I

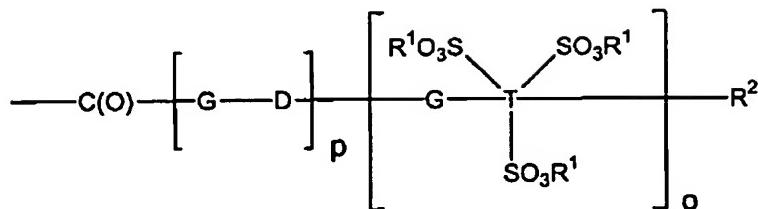


Formula II

and

Appl. No.: 10/090,525

Filed: March 4, 2002

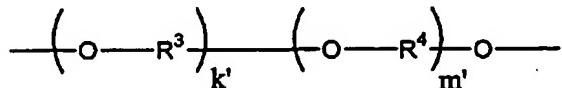
Page 5

Formula III

wherein:

p and o are selected so that the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 200 and 2,000,000 g/mol;

G is selected from the group consisting of C₂ to C₂₂ aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl units containing at least two terminal oxygen atoms and derivatives of a polyglycol of the formula HO-[R³-O]_{k'}-[R⁴-O]_{m'}-H, corresponding to an organyl unit



wherein R³ and R⁴ are each C₂-C₂₂ alkylene radicals, and are the same or different and k'+m' ≥ 1, wherein k' and m' are selected so that the average molecular weight of the comb polymer is between 200 and 2,000,000 g/mol;

D is selected from the group consisting of C₂ to C₂₂ aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl units containing at least two terminal acyl groups;

T is selected from the group consisting of sulphonated aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl radicals containing at least two terminal acyl groups;

at least some of said R¹ are lithium and sodium counterions, and optionally at least some of said R¹ are counterions different from lithium and sodium counterions; and

R² is selected from the group consisting of:

- aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic amino functional radicals including a

Appl. No.: 10/090,525

Filed: March 4, 2002

Page 6

-NH-R⁵ or -NR⁵₂ group, wherein R⁵ is selected from the group consisting of C₁ to C₂₂ alkyl and aryl radicals;

aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic radicals including a -C(=O)OR⁶ group,

wherein R⁶ is selected from the group consisting of C₁ to C₂₀₀ alkyl and aryl radicals;

aromatic, aliphatic and cycloaliphatic organyl radicals bridged via ether functions -O-R⁵, wherein R⁵ is the same as defined above;

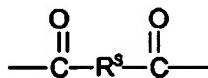
polyalkoxy compounds bridged via ether functions of the formula

-O-[R⁷-O]_q-[R⁸-O]_r-Y, wherein R⁷ and R⁸ are each independently selected from the group consisting of C₂ to C₂₂ alkyl radicals and are the same or different, Y is hydrogen or a C₁-C₂₂ aliphatic radical, and q+r ≥ 1; and

mono- or polyethoxylated sulphonated organyl radicals bridged via ether functions, and alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salts thereof.

29. (new) The comb polymer according to Claim 4, wherein the esters of polyacrylic acid and esters of polymethylacrylic acid comprise esters of polyacrylic acid and esters of polymethylacrylic acid with at least one C₁-C₂₂ aliphatic, cycloaliphatic or aromatic alcohol.

30. (new) The comb polymer according to Claim 27, wherein D comprises a combination of two or more different acid components comprising an organyl unit of the formula



wherein R^s is selected from C₂ to C₂₂ aromatic and linear or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated aliphatic bifunctional radicals.